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*Synopsis.*]

THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE  
POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES.

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The original settlements within the territory now constituting the United States were made mainly along the Atlantic coast. As the people increased and multiplied they spread inland to the westward, following in the main parallels of latitude. The northwestern states have been peopled, so far as their inhabitants of native origin are concerned, from the northeastern states, and similarly the southwestern states have been peopled from the southeastern states. There has been little movement of population from north to south or the reverse.

The importation of negro slaves from the West Indies, and from Africa, began at a very early date in colonial history. The slave population was never of importance in the northern states, but in the southern states it early became a very large element, so large and so well adapted to the climatic conditions as to practically monopolize the labor of that part of the country. It constitutes now about one-eighth of the total population.

The social position which the colored element occupies in the south is in the north filled by the foreign element. Immigration from Europe to this country was never of great importance until 1847, when the famines in Ireland and political troubles in Germany produced an overflow from these countries into this. Since then immigration has continued in enormous and rapidly increasing volume, until up to the present time more than fifteen and one-half million people have crossed the Atlantic and found homes in this country. Most of these people are from northern Europe, from Ireland, Great Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia. In recent years

the Russians, Poles, Bohemians, and Italians have joined the throng in considerable numbers.

Nearly all these immigrants land in New York, and thence scatter over the northern part of the country, being drawn hither or thither by considerations of climate or occupation. In the northeastern states they have to a certain extent supplanted the native stock. Of all these foreigners the British are scattered the most widely over the north. The Irish are found mainly in southern New England and New York; the French Canadians almost entirely in New England, while the Germans have spread to the westward; and the Scandinavians are found in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the Dakotas, where they have located as far north as possible without going beyond our jurisdiction. Summing up the habitat of the foreign element, we may say that it is found wherever the negro is not found, that is, throughout the north and west, while the negro is found only in the south. It results from this that in classifying these two elements of the population in accordance with the elements of climate they are found to be in the highest degree complementary. The foreign-born element constitutes about one-seventh of the total population.

A study of the environment of the population, and of these elements, is of interest, since climate and elevation have doubtless exerted a considerable influence, either directly or indirectly, in bringing about the present distribution.

The broader features of the distribution of population are as follows: that the great body of the inhabitants are found in the eastern part of the country and in middle latitudes, and, of course, in that part of the country which is drained to the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover, that nearly half the population of the country is located in the drainage basin of the Mississippi River.

The great body of the inhabitants live at low altitudes above the sea, nine-tenths being found at a less elevation than 1500 feet, and three-fourths of them below 1000 feet.

As to temperature, the great body of the population live where the mean annual temperature is between 45 and 55 degrees, and as to rainfall, the majority live where its mean annual amount is between 30 and 50 inches.

Considering the two elements, the foreign born and the colored, the former are found in northern latitudes and the latter in southern latitudes. While both elements are found at low altitudes, the colored seek the low coast regions, and avoid high altitudes in a much greater degree than the foreign born do. As to temperature, the foreign born are found under much colder conditions than the colored, the latter seeking a hot climate, while the former are found under colder conditions than the average of the total population. The case is similar, though in a less degree, in regard to rainfall, the colored seeking regions of great rainfall, while the foreign born are found where the rainfall is very much less.

The habitat of the people as regards elevation, temperature, and rainfall is summed up in the following table, showing the average elevation, average mean annual temperature, and average mean annual rainfall under which the total population, the foreign born, and the colored elements were living in 1890.

	Total Population.	Foreign Born.	Colored.
Average elevation (feet) . . . . .	788	890	427
Mean annual temperature (degrees Fahrenheit) . . . . .	53	48	61
Mean annual rainfall (inches) . . . . .	41.4	37.7	50.9